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ABSTRACT

Inclusion of bilingual education in higher education, both as an area of study and as a medium of instruction, will facilitate an increased level of academic achievement for Hispanic students. Hispanics as a group do not exhibit like characteristics in language proficiency in either English or Spanish, or like characteristics in cultural or socio-economic orientations. A non-traditional approach is necessary to address the problem of underachievement of minority groups. University concerns with maintenance of academic quality must also be based on freedom from prejudice on ethnic, racial, or cultural differences. Care should be exercised relative to undergraduate admissions: however, reliance on standardized test scores casts doubt on the fairness of universities using this criterion while charged with providing equal education opportunities to all students. Programs must be modified and developed to meet student needs. Traditional courses should be taught two ways: completely in Spanish and bilingually in English and Spanish. If postsecondary institutions are to reach Chicanos at the lower economic level, bilingual models must be used, and the institution of continuing education must be brought to the barrios. There Hispanics should be utilized as instructors. Only non-traditional, creative methods based on sound educational, socio-psychological, and philosophical principles can produce quality education for all. (CM)

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INSTITUTIONALIZING BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Programmatic Concerns at Institutions of Higher Education

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Efforts designed and implemented in grades k-12 in Bilingual Education must be refocused on post-secondary education to help meet the needs of Hispanic students who still fail to achieve academically in a satisfactory manner. The purpose of the paper is to explore inclusion of bilingual education in higher education as an area of study, as a medium of instruction, as a vehicle to return to a more classical view of education as related to learning of a foreign language and as a means to increase Hispanic participation in Continuing Education. Student needs, University concerns and programmatic issues are discussed and addressed in an integrated manner.

A description of one alternative approach including teaching traditional courses in Spanish completely, other bilingually in English and Spanish as one model is presented.

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 7-11 April 1980, Boston, Massachusetts.

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INSTITUTIONALIZING BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION

Programmatic Concerns at Instituions of Higher Education

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Traditionally, efforts at designing and implementing bilingual education have focused on kindergarten and elementary school levels while to a lesser extent on secondary grades. The reality of the continuing lack of academic achievement of Hispanic students, especially at the level of post-secondary education, compels one to examine assumptions relative to confining this approach to these lower levels and speculate about the possibilities and ramifications of its extension to higher levels of instruction. The purpose of this paper is to explore an extension of the traditional view to include bilingual education in Higher Education not only as an area of study, but as a medium of instruction at the post secondary level. One assumption underlying this position is the following. Societal demands can be met as institutions become sensitive to changing group and individual needs and address them in non-traditional ways. The institutions, however, must identify and maintain those values that transcend cultures and times, e.g., the need for group and individual sense of dignity; the need for an education, the need for academic excellence, etc.

A host of reasons can be cited for considering this approach as valid and viable. In Texas, for example, a critical need exists for

teachers trained in Bilingual Education. Hispanic students possessing the basic linguistic skills in Spanish and English could form a pool of potential teachers capable of becoming prepared in the least amount of time, all other factors being equal. Additionally, as Mexico becomes increasingly important politically, bilingual graduates from all disciplines and professions will also become increasingly attractive to industry as well as government.

Traditional education for the Humanities, Sciences and the Professions have valued the study and acquisition of a foreign language or languages. The mark of an educated person has been, and will continue to be, the ability to speak a foreign language. Bilingual studcnts have a capacity that can become a basis for enhancing their ability to master two languages and perhaps a third. Bilinguality can complement the mastery of chosen disciplines or professions to a distinctive level. Ivy League schools have traditionally stressed a classical education. Public universities, having yielded to the demands of a technological society in some instances to a greater extent than private schools, have deviated from a stress on the Liberal Arts. Furthermore, the "culture" of our society, in the best sense of the word, has not been stressed in either the public schools, or colleges and universities. This has been due, in part, to the assumption that "culture" is synonymous with an elitist approach to education and life. The two, however, can be distinct. A support of bilingual education, its ideals and methods could sway attitudes toward a more traditional view of education.

A second premise underlying this paper is that bilingual education approaches in higher education will facilitate the increased level of academic achievement for Hispanic students. Reasons for this position are presented below with discussion as appropriate.

Student Needs

Observation of a number of students and a study of a variety of university policies pertaining to instruction, content and programs have yielded the following points of information that if considered with the intent to increase bilingual students' academic achievement may lead to the conclusion that available resources, although non-traditional in implementation can be utilized to solve the problem.

An empiric consideration of student needs yields the following generalizations requiring validation. Bilingual students, in this case, Chicanos,

1. may have cognitive skills highly developed, but because of ineffective previous educational experiences, lack academic skills, one being an academic language, another being quantitative and logical reasoning skills,
2. may be motivated to achieve; however, possess negative attitudes toward learning in general, fostered by environments that have been, and continue to be, inappropriate and non-responsive,
3. may have a high school diploma, be adults legally, and have continuing education needs that could be met at a Community College; however, often times the courses do not transfer to a baccalaureate institution causing students loss of time and money, neither of which is plentiful to them,
4. may have adequate academic skills, developed in Mexico, but being mono-lingual in Spanish need a culturally supportive environment for continued academic progress,
5. may lack an awareness of the nature of quality academic performance due to a lack of stringent requirements of quality at the secondary school level,

6. may need financial assistance to improve academic skills in a relatively slower, but more effective pace available to those needing to develop appropriate academic skills.

As research elsewhere has indicated, Hispanics are far from a homogeneous group exhibiting like characteristics in language proficiency in either English or Spanish, or like characteristics in cultural or socio-economic orientations. This heterogeneity provides another argument for the implementation of non-traditional approaches to address the problem of underachievement of minority groups.

University Concerns

In addition to student needs, the university, as an institution committed to a given set of values relating to the "search for truth" is rightly concerned with the maintenance of standards of academic quality. This concern, however, must be based on a genuine interest in quality, while free of prejudice based on ethnic, racial or cultural differences. Additionally, the quality of academic standards must be maintained through legitimate means. This means that all students, regardless of ethnicity, etc., should be examined in courses in a manner that intends to test the mastery of a subject matter after an instructor has identified the subject matter, prepared and interacted with the student on this subject matter in an appropriate manner and provided the student every opportunity to learn. Faculty development efforts at universities should be mounted and emphasized if for no other reason than to insure that students are given a fair opportunity to learn and are protected from irresponsible claims of professorial "academic freedom."

A second legitimate University concern is related to policies for admission. It is accepted that resources, scarce or otherwise, should not be squandered. Persons not suited by talent or interest to quality academic

study should not be encouraged or permitted to waste faculty resources. It is also accepted that institutions of higher education vary in capacity to offer truly outstanding programs. Universities should identify their missions as to role to play in scope and level of programs. Students can then fit their personal goals to stated missions.

It is possible to justify a few, select institutions possessing outstanding histories of academic excellence and leadership, justifying stringent criteria for admission. Others, especially state supported institutions, could approximate open admissions to address national educational opportunities objectives. As long as it is evident that elementary and secondary schools are not effectively preparing minority students to succeed in post-secondary education, it is essential that exit criteria take precedence over entrance requirements. Exit criteria could be developed to the level of sophistication evident in tests used as entrance requirements.

Care should, and can be exercised, relative to undergraduate admissions; however, recent controversy over exclusive or major reliance on standardized test scores casts doubt on the "fairness" of universities' utilizing this criterion while charged with providing equal education opportunities to all students.

Programmatic Issues

After consideration of student needs and university concerns, programmatic issues can be identified. Colleges and Universities need to consider the following issues relative to program modification and development to address the foregoing needs.

1. Development of programs and courses to explore methods for developing higher order cognitive and academic skills requiring application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation rather than memorization and recall of facts, interpretation and translation of information, or requiring unrealistic performance with the idea of "culling out" students who are not "university material."

2. Examination of tutorial programs currently in effect for emphasis on the development of higher order cognitive and academic skills, rather than merely stressing "passing the course."

3. Development of programs stressing the "structure of the discipline" rather than programmatic outcomes solely, of a course taught in an isolated and atomistic approach, thereby relying on the student's disposition and/or capacity to synthesize his experience into a coherent whole.

4. Exploration of approaches to offer courses taught entirely in Spanish or bilingually in English and Spanish to maximize opportunities for Hispanics to profit from instruction.

5. Exploration of methods for increasing faculty resources to implement bilingual programs at the Community College and University level, where appropriate.

6. Implementation and refinement of advising and counseling services to preclude "overloading" on difficult courses, courses requiring excessive preparation time, and to provide career and employment possibilities.

It can be pointed out that several of the foregoing alternative approaches are currently offered at The University of Texas at El Paso. For example, a program composed of a set of lower division courses taught in Spanish is offered to monolingual students from Mexico and is available for Chicano students who could profit from this program. The purpose of such an alternative is to provide students opportunities to progress toward a degree by earning University credit while continuing to improve English communication skills or by using their Spanish abilities to develop and enhance needed academic skills. Current offerings in Spanish are courses in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Linguistics, Political Science, Philosophy, Sociology, Accounting and Economics. Up until approximately two years ago, a course in the Old Testament was required as a cultural awareness tool. Students in the current program are encouraged to enroll in Chicanos Studies courses. Each of these courses uses English texts.

Approximately 1200 to 1500 students have enrolled in the program since 1968, and an estimated 600 students have graduated after having begun their academic careers in the Inter-American Studies program. One such graduate is currently serving as Assistant to the Academic Vice President.

One important programmatic concern is that of Continuing Education. Rupert Trujillo, from the University of New Mexico, in a presentation at the Bi-Regional Hispanic Education Conference in San Antonio in February 1980 claims that minorities and the economically/socially disadvantaged are not participating in continuing education in proportions warranted by their numbers. Furthermore, he claims that the rate of participation is decreasing. He states that all forms of education in this country have great difficulty in reaching people from the lowest levels of the economic structure. Trujillo makes several recommendations including the following:

1. To continue to support federal and state financial assistance to part-time students. (This was not possible until only recently.)
2. To utilize the expertise found in Hispanic groups to involve them as an instructional force in continuing education.
3. To identify ways to bring continuing education "to the people", i.e., bring the institution for continuing education to the barrios, down to the local level where the poor and "unreachable" can be reached.

If post-secondary institutions are to reach the unreachable, again, non-traditional approaches must be implemented. If continuing education is to have impact for Chicanos at the lower level of the economic structure, bilingual education models must be used. And the impact must be made at the local level. In Texas, for example, Chicano students attend Community Colleges and local universities at an overwhelming greater rate than at the University of Texas at Austin, Texas A & M, Texas Tech or the University of Houston. If post-secondary education for Chicanos is to have an impact, it will have to begin at the local level where the non-traditional approaches mentioned above would be feasible and justifiable to the extent that they will be effective.

Summary

Institutionalization of Bilingual Education programs in post-secondary education can be an effective means of addressing the low academic achievement levels of Hispanic students. It can possibly serve as a means to emphasis traditional concepts of a liberal education. Student needs, institutional concerns and programmatic issues must be integrated into a planned approach that will satisfy these three to impact on equal educational opportunities for all students. Only non-traditional, creative methods based on sound educational, socio-psychological and philosophical principles can produce the hoped for outcomes of quality education for all.